DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 265 CS 009 196

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TITLE Celebrate Literature! A Spiraling Curriculum for Grades K-6.
INSTITUTION Elgin School District 46, Ill.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 15p.
AVAILABLE FROM Dr. Margery Sauer, School District 6-46, 355 E. Chicago St., Elgin, IL 60120 ($10.00).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Childrens Literature; Class Activities; *Critical Thinking; Curriculum Guides; Elementary Education; *English Curriculum; *Independent Reading; Reading Aloud to Others; *Story Grammar; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Story Structure

ABSTRACT

"Celebrate Literature!," a multi-volume articulated literature curriculum for grades K-6, intended to foster students' awareness of their literary heritage, increase their knowledge of story structure and provide examples of excellence in children's literature, is described in this paper. The paper also describes how by building upon established practices of reading aloud to children, the curriculum offers teachers information about genre, books, authors, and illustrators and provides a structure for using children's literature in the classroom. The seven guides form a spiraling curriculum designed to teach students to understand, evaluate and appreciate literature. The curriculum goals which the paper identifies are: (1) to introduce children to their literary heritage; (2) to encourage children to read for pleasure and knowledge; (3) to provide children with knowledge of literary elements and structure; (4) to allow for creative response to literature; (5) to develop children's ability to evaluate literature; and (6) to develop independent readers and learners. (RAE)

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ABSTRACT

CELEBRATE LITERATURE!

A Spiraling Curriculum for Grades K-6

Celebrate Literature! is an articulated literature curriculum for grades K-6. This curriculum is intended to foster students' awareness of their literary heritage, increase their knowledge of story structure and provide them opportunities for aesthetic experiences through creative response to examples of excellence in children's literature. Celebrate Literature! builds upon established practices of reading aloud to children. It gives teachers information about genre, books, authors and ilustrators and provides a structure for using children's literature in the classroom. Teaching strategies which facilitate discussion, creative response and critical thinking are described and modeled.

This curriculum asks teachers to model the process of reading by reading to children. The seven guides form a spiraling curriculum designed to teach students to understand, evaluate and appreciate literature. The goals of Celebrate Literature! are:

1. To introduce children to their literary heritage.
2. To encourage children to read for pleasure and knowledge.
3. To provide children with knowledge of literary elements and structure.
4. To allow for creative response to literature.
5. To develop children's ability to evaluate literature.
6. To develop independent readers and learners.

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CELEBRATE LITERATURE!
A Spiraling Curriculum for Grades K-6

Prepared by curriculum writing teams under the direction of Carol Fox, Children's Literature Consultant and Dr. Margery Sauer, Language Arts and Reading Coordinator, School District U-46, Elgin, Illinois.

Celebrate Literature! has been developed to provide support for elementary language arts and reading programs, and as an aid to teachers in planning for reading instruction outside of the basal textbook. Research indicates that opportunities for children to listen to books read aloud, availability of quality reading materials, and experiences with increasingly sophisticated story concepts, are conditions which support the acquisition of critical reading skills. The importance of a literature curriculum can best be illustrated by listing the benefits to students of such a program. A literature curriculum:

* develops language and listening skills
* models good writing
* encourages critical thinking
* increases literary and artistic appreciation and expression
* increases general knowledge
* encourages children to apply independent research and study skills
* provides knowledge of the structures of literature
* extends and enriches the mind
* feeds the imagination
* develops creativity
* encourages children to read independently
* increases understanding of our cultural heritage
* increases understanding of history
* reveals human beings in conflict with society, nature, and themselves and models change or lack of it and its consequences
* illuminates human behavior, motivation, and ethical values.

Celebrate Literature! gives teachers background information about specific genre, authors and stories, describes interactive teaching strategies, and provides a structure for using children's literature in the classroom. This curriculum asks teachers to model the process of reading by reading to children, recognizes children's individuality by encouraging children to read independently, and provides

instruction in the skills necessary for life-long learning and reading.

Introduction

Celebrate Literature! is intended to give you an opportunity to share the pleasure of books with your students and to encourage them to discover the delight of reading. Set aside an inviolate time each day to read aloud to children for the sheer pleasure of it and allow children to respond. That is the heart of this program. There is strong evidence that the association children have with books and language during this time will carry over into other times of the day as the year progresses.

Literature Strands and Materials - The curriculum explores specific books and specific areas in the field of children's literature. The books were selected on the basis of quality and appropriateness for grade level. The strands, or genre, chosen for study are Folk Literature, Poetry, Picture Books and Fiction, Author Study/Biography, and Nonfiction. The books included in the curriculum have been chosen, not only to share as good books with children, but also to help children see relationships between and among books. However, these books should not be thought of as the only ones to be read to your students. On the contrary, your own favorites should be shared. There are many reasons to read books in the classroom; the important idea to convey is that reading is worth the effort and brings pleasure and information at the same time.

Questioning Techniques - The depth of understanding children gain from books depends upon the questioning and discussion techniques you use. Children need consistent opportunities to recall, to associate, to compare and contrast, and to respond critically and creatively to what has been read. The questions provided in Celebrate Literature! emphasize interactive discussions, while the activities encourage responses reflecting each individual's understanding of the story or poem.

Library Media Center - Children should be encouraged to choose freely from among many books for pleasure reading. Therefore, there is a strong connection between this curriculum and the Library Media Center. The old adage, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for one night; teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime," was never more

true than when teaching children to use the library. The teacher and the librarian must work together sharing stories with children and introducing children gradually to resources found in the library. Keeping the librarian abreast of your plans and what you are doing in the classroom will ensure her interest and support for your activities. As you observe children select their own books, note the influence that your "literature time" has on their decision making. It is precisely this influence that is important in the educational process. You are leading children toward excellence.

Activities - The activities provided are examples of thoughtful, evaluative and creative responses to literature. Since response to literature is always a growing, expanding process you are encouraged to develop your own activities to meet the objectives of the program. This curriculum is flexible enough to allow you to decide in what manner and to what extent you use it. Your program will be successful if you do the following:

- _ Establish a "literature time" during which children are read to each day.
- _ Provide experiences which will allow children to interact with books.
- _ Allow children to choose their own books and help them learn to locate them.
- _ Give children time to read.
- _ Provide gentle instruction in literary terms.
- _ Encourage children to share their thoughts about authors, illustrators, pictures, poetry, story, and ideas in books.
- _ Encourage children to play with language.

In addition, when you show enthusiasm for books in general, and the children's choices in particular, you model the importance of reading. When you help children connect the thoughts, ideas and feelings they take from the books they read into other areas in the curriculum, you give credence to the idea that reading is important - not just as a school activity, but also as an aesthetic experience that is both pleasurable and enriching.

The ideas in this curiculum have been collected from teachers to share with teachers. As you use these lessons daily, keep these key words in mind:

Discover

Share

Create

Imagine

Celebrate

And Enjoy! ! ! ! ! !

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the program are the same for all grade levels, however the objectives identified to meet these goals increase in breadth and depth appropriate to grade level.

Goal 1: To introduce children to their literary heritage

The student will:

...recognize specific authors and illustrators of children's books and their works.

...choose favorite nursery rhymes, fairy tales, poems, stories to memorize and/or retell.

...listen to examples of excellence from all five strands of the curriculum.

Goal 2: To encourage children to read for pleasure and knowledge

The student will:

...choose books from the library for pleasure reading which relate to the five curriculum strands.

...request the rereading or retelling of favorite stories and poems.

...respond to questions about books, stories, authors and illustrators.

...share information about books, stories, authors and illustrators in a variety of ways.

Goal 3: To provide children with knowledge of literary elements and structure

The student will:

...understand the following terms.

A. folklore
folk tale
talking beast tale
cumulative tale
fairy tale
motif
transformation tales
noodlehead stories
jump story
ghost story
enchantment
disenchantment
modern fairy tale

B. poem and poetry
Mother Goose
rhyme
rhythm
meter
simile
metaphor
figurative language
imagery
personification

C. fiction
picture book
books without words
alphabet books
publisher
author
illustrator
illustration
copyright date
dedication
Caldecott Medal
Newbery Medal
character
setting
plot
conflict
theme

D. biography
autobiography
hero
heroine
fictionalized biography

E. dewey decimal system
reference book
research

Goal 4: To allow for creative response to literature

The student will:

...respond to literature through drama, art, music, puppetry, storytelling, mime, dance, rhythm, writing, or other creative means.

...share creative responses with a variety of audiences.

...use patterns to create his/her own story or poem.

..."publish" books.

Goal 5: To develop children's ability to evaluate literature

The student will:

...identify a book on the basis of an author's or illustrator's style.

...demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of each genre.
...identify examples of genre on the basis of characteristics of the genre.

... compare and contrast characters based on character development.

...select favorite authors, illustrators, and stories from a wide experiential base.

...use consistent criteria to evaluate stories.

Goal 6: To develop independent readers and thinkers

The student will:

...identify parts of a book - spine, title page, etc.

...locate a wide variety of materials using the card catalog, library classification system, and reference materials in the library media center.

...identify and use indices, tables of contents, maps, charts, graphs and other informational parts of books.

...develop research skills including gathering, organizing and presenting information.

...use critical thinking skills to hypothesize, synthesize and evaluate ideas and information.

...develop personal bibliographies.

...choose books from the library media center.

...choose to read.

UNIT FORMAT

Purposes of unit	- Specific teacher objectives for the unit.
Materials	- Books and audio-visuals necessary to teach the unit.
Background for the teacher	- Definitions of terms and information necessary for teaching the concepts in the unit.
Motivating activities	- Introduction of concepts and individual books within the unit. Also includes sample discussion questions.
Mini-lesson	- Instructional information on specific concepts/content. (Not included for all units.)
Creative response	- Suggestions for individual student involvement and group participation with the literature of the unit.
Culminating activities	- Examples of group activities which synthesize the concepts and experiences provided by the unit.
Suggestions	- Tips on when to use the unit and appropriate teaching strategies. (Not included for all units.)
Evaluation	- Teacher observations of children's behavior.

CURRICULUM NOTES

There are five units (strands): Traditional Literature, Poetry, Fiction, Biography, and Nonfiction. Units need not be used in the order presented, nor are they intended as the only exposure to the genre. For instance, poetry may be introduced as a separate unit and then continued throughout the year.

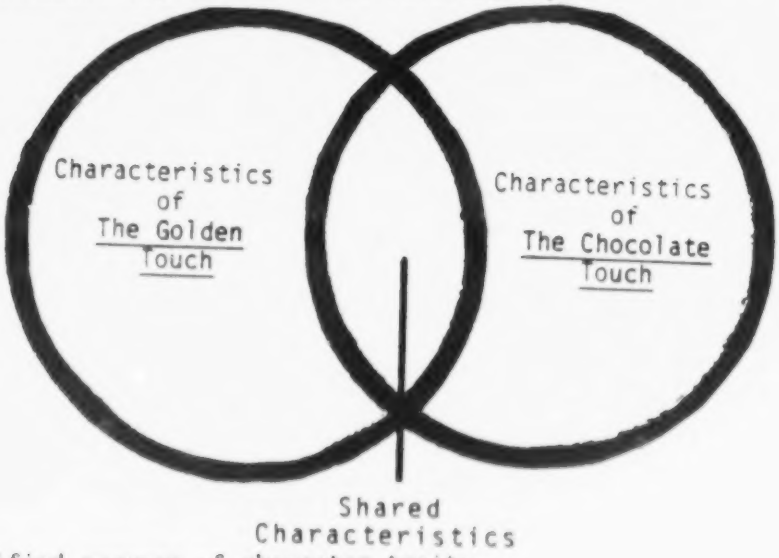
In some units there are references to teaching strategies that may not be familiar to every teacher. The following definitions are included to provide a common understanding of terms. Individual teachers may find it necessary to locate additional information on some or all of these procedures.

DR-TA - (Directed Reading - Thinking Activity)
A problem solving procedure used to present written text that allows readers to make predictions and evaluate these predictions as the reading progresses.

DL-TA - (Directed Listening - Thinking Activity)
The same procedure as DR-TA, except the teacher presents material orally.

Venn-Diagram - A schematic representation of relationships.

EXAMPLE:



Character Poetry - modified acronym of character traits.

EXAMPLE:
F - friendly
R - rhyming
A - adorable
N - naughty
C - clever
E - engaging
S - small

Choral Speaking - multiple voices speaking together or in planned sequence.

unison	- total group speaking same words at once.
with actions	- addition of hand or body movement.
dialogue	- parts of group speaking at different times.
line-a-child	- each child has one line to say.
cumulative	- add voices.
sequential	- voices (single or multiple) follow in pattern.

Chart Stories - group or class stories written on large chart paper.

Story Map - a graphic or symbolic representation of the reader's understanding of a story.

Time Line - sequential outline of the events in a story.

Webbing - an activity encouraging word associations, extended meanings and concept classifications.

Readers Theater - an interpretive reading of a literary selection involving more than one student. Production includes narration and dialogue between characters.

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Classroom Management

As children grow older and are more able to read books by themselves, this program expands from read-aloud sessions to include read-along and read-alone activities. The read-aloud portion of the program remains constant and continuous through the grades from kindergarten to grade six. However, teachers ask, "How do I manage the classroom when children are doing read-along and read-alone projects in a number of different books?" The following schedules are provided as options to help answer the question of time management.

Incorporating Literature into the Basal Program

Plan A

Most teachers using basal readers group children according to reading levels. Using those same groups, teachers can incorporate trade books (literature) into their regular reading program. A ninety minute reading time divided among three groups is an average schedule. The following schedule allows the teacher to read aloud and discuss books with children every day as a whole class activity. The teacher also meets with two of the three basal reading groups each day for 30 minutes while the other two groups are doing seatwork that relate either to the literature time, sustained reading in trade books, writing, or practice work from the basal.

LIT = Literature Curriculum Read-Aloud Session
B-1 = Basal Reading Group 1
B-2 = Basal Reading Group 2
B-3 = Basal Reading Group 3
Activity = Creative response, culminating activity, basal practice activity, independent reading or research.

	M	T	W	T	F
	Heterogeneous Grouping				
30 min.	LIT	LIT	LIT	LIT	LIT
	Homogeneous Grouping				
30 min.	B-1	B-3	B-2	B-1	Activity
30 min.	B-2	B-1	B-3	B-3	Activity

	M	T	W	T	F
Practice Activity/ Writing	B-3/B-2	B-2/B-1	B-1/B-3	B-2/B-3	Activity
Sustained Reading	B-1/B-3	B-2/B-3	B-1/B-2	B-1/B-2	Activity

By shortening the basal reading time to 20 minutes each, you could meet with all three groups each day. The read-aloud time, depending on your purpose, could include your literature lessons for concept development and genre introduction, book talks, poetry readings, writing models, and author introductions. Ideally, you might have still another read-aloud time in the afternoon solely for pleasure reading.

Plan B

A second plan provides for more whole and small group creative response time while still using basal materials. The low and average basal groups meet with you twice a week, the high group only once. All grouping is heterogeneous except the basal reading groups. More time is spent on creative response to literature and less time is spent with workbooks.

	M	T	W	T	F
			Heterogeneous Grouping		
30 min.	LIT	LIT	LIT	LIT	LIT
30 min.	B-1	B-3	Literature Activity	B-2	Literature Activity
30 min.	B-2	B-1	Literature Activity	B-3	Literature Activity

	M	T	W	T	F
Writing	B-3/B-2	B-2/B-1	Literature Activity	B-1/B-3	Literature Activity
Sustained Reading	B-1/B-3	B-2/B-3	Literature Activity	B-1/B-2	Literature Activity

The children have writing folders and journals that are established as on-going activities. Suggested activities for writing specific to children's reading are included throughout this curriculum. The children are allowed uninterrupted sustained reading time in trade and library books and given time to respond to them in many ways. The activity days provide time to work on creative or culminating activities in small groups while the teacher assists. These are the constants around which the program revolves.

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Plan C: Integrated Language Arts Curriculum

In a totally integrated language arts curriculum, students are involved in language and literacy activities at all times. Basal readers are available as reading material, but instruction is not derived from the basal series. Rather, instruction is guided by the reading and writing needs of the students. Each day students are engaged in reading and writing in the following ways:

writing first drafts,
revising and editing,
conferencing with their peers or the teacher on a piece of writing,
reading by themselves or in a group,
reacting to what they have read in their journals,
sharing a book with a small group, another individual or the teacher,
reading to children in another class, or to the principal,
writing letters to authors,
publishing their own books,
any of countless ways of communicating through reading and writing.

The teacher's role in such a curriculum is to provide an environment that supports language and literacy learning, to provide the instruction that each student needs to grow, and to model a belief in the importance of language and literacy.

Literature is the core of this curriculum. The teacher reads classic literature to the students, both for the enjoyment of the story and for purposes of instruction in literary genre and literary elements. Students read literature, both for the enjoyment of it and as models of good writing. Donald Graves (1983) says,

> "All children need literature.. Children who are authors need it even more. Because the children write daily and across the curriculum, their need for information is raised significantly. They need to be surrounded with poetry, stories, information books, biography, science and history, imaginative and factual books. The children need to hear, speak, and read literature. Literature provides more than facts. It provides drama, problem solving, and precise language. Best of all, it is written by authors who know children and write with different voices than those usually found in textbooks. Children's literature covers virtually the entire span of human experience and knowledge."[1]

There are no static reading groups in this curriculum. Groups are formed and change depending on the purposes and needs of the children. Groups are formed to respond to a piece of writing, to share a book read, to share responses to a book

[1] Donald Graves, Writing: Teachers and Children At Work, (Exeter: Heinemann, 1983), p. 67.

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commonly read, to receive instruction in a reading or writing skill needed by all group members, or for any other literate purpose. The constants of this curriculum are:

daily reading aloud to students,
daily independent reading,
daily writing,
discussion of what is being written and read,
valuing of authorship.

This curriculum is not established overnight. It is achieved gradually with constant and sincere administrative support.

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